



## HAVASUPAI TRIBAL COUNCIL

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### HAVASUPAI NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chairman Watahomigie/Vice-Chairman Putesoy

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### ***Havasupai Tribe Survives Flood – Begins to Rebuild Village***

*Supai, AZ* – The Havasupai Tribe, known as the People of the Blue-Green Water, survived another disastrous flood event this week. On Saturday, August 16, a flash flood hit Supai Village as a result of heavy, localized rain, compounded by the breach of the Redlands Dam on non-Indian land. This was not the first time the Redlands Dam broke causing a wall of water to surge through the Village.

The Tribe is grateful that no lives were lost. Some livestock perished.

The emergency evacuation of over 400 tourists and tribal members was ordered by the Tribe on Saturday and Sunday. Evacuations were conducted by AirWest Helicopters, D.P.S., Arizona National Guard, the American Red Cross and others. On Monday the Tribal Council formally declared a State of Emergency, finding that the disaster “threatens the health, life, safety and welfare” of tribal members and tourists.

“The Tribe is extremely grateful for the support and assistance we have received from other government agencies and charities,” said Chairman Don Watahomigie. “This flood was bad, but the effects would have been much worse if evacuation efforts were not coordinated so well.”

The flood caused damage to some homes in the Village and flood waters devastated the tourist campgrounds and the hiking trails leading to the campgrounds from the Village.

“Due to the loss of nearly all our tourist facilities and extensive damage to our hiking trails, no tourists will be allowed into Supai until further notice from Tribal Council,” said Billy Jack, Director of Tourism. “It may take two months or more to rebuild. We just don’t know how long,” he said.

The Tribal Council has coordinated to have professional damage assessment teams to inspect homes, trails and campground facilities. Once the extent of the damage is known, the Tribe will begin the long process to rebuild. According to Vice-Chairman

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Putesoy, "We rely on our tourism industry to support our tribal government programs. This shut-down will really hurt us. But we will survive."

Rebuilding tourist hiking trails and the campground facilities will be a high priority for the Tribe. "We will open things up as fast as we can," said Billy Jack, Tourist Manager.

The Tribal Council thanks all agencies who have assisted, including Governor Janet Napolitano, National Relief Charities, American Red Cross, Hualapai Lodge, Hualapai Tribal Council, Air West Helicopters, Havasupai Tribal Rangers, First Responders and Tribal Security, Department of Public Safety, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Camp Verde Yavapai Apache Tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Hualapai Emergency Medical Service, Hualapai Tribal Programs, Indian Health Service, the Coconino County Sheriff's Office and many others.

"All who have helped us during this disaster will be in our prayers forever. They are friends of the Havasupai," said The Havasupai Tribal Council.

For more information on the effects of this flood, please contact Thomas Siyuja Sr., Emergency Coordinator at 928-448-2257.